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(54) **OCCUPANT DETECTING SEAT ASSEMBLY WITH HEADREST AND METHOD OF MOVING HEADREST**

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A47C 7/38 (2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.** **297/410**; 297/216.12; 297/408

(58) **Field of Classification Search** 297/408, 297/410, 216.12
See application file for complete search history.

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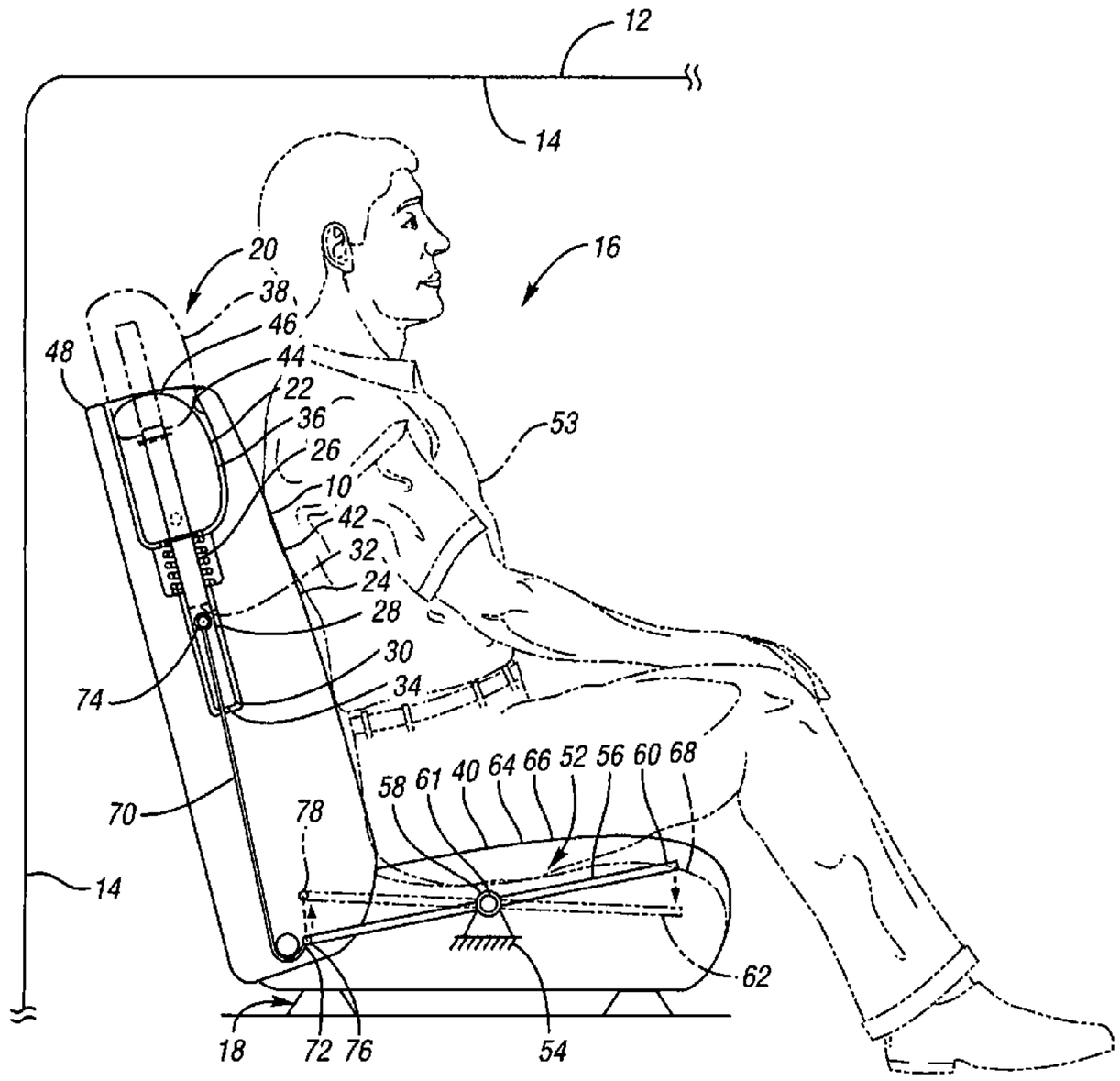
Primary Examiner—Anthony D. Barfield

(57) **ABSTRACT**

A seat assembly includes a seat and a headrest connected to the seat and movable between a first position and a second position with respect to the seat. The seat assembly also includes a biasing element biasing the headrest toward the second position. A releasable headrest restraining mechanism restrains the headrest in the first position when the seat is unoccupied and releases the headrest to permit movement of the headrest via the biasing element to the second position when the seat is occupied. A method of moving the headrest is also provided.

12 Claims, 3 Drawing Sheets



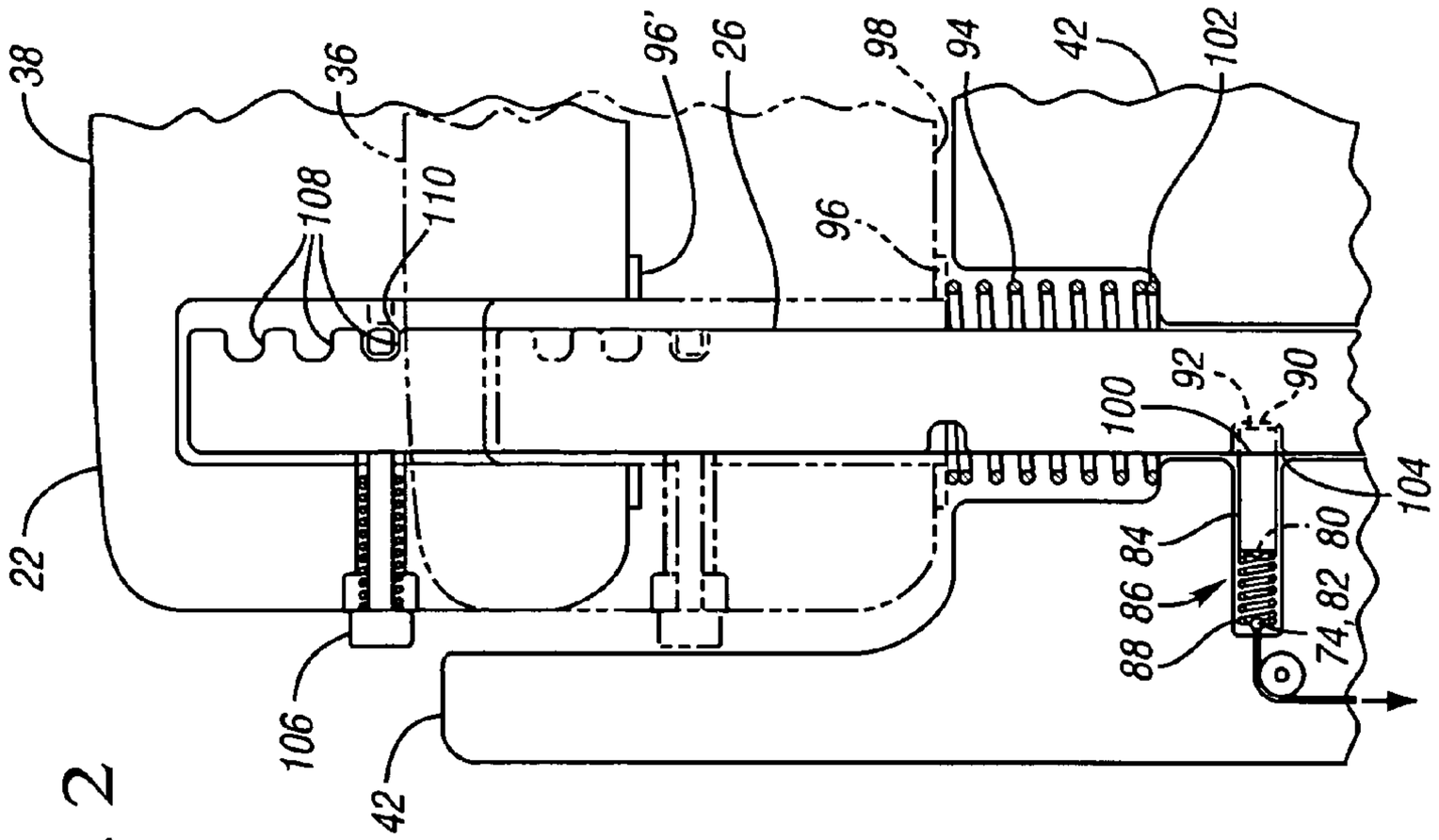

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FIG. 2

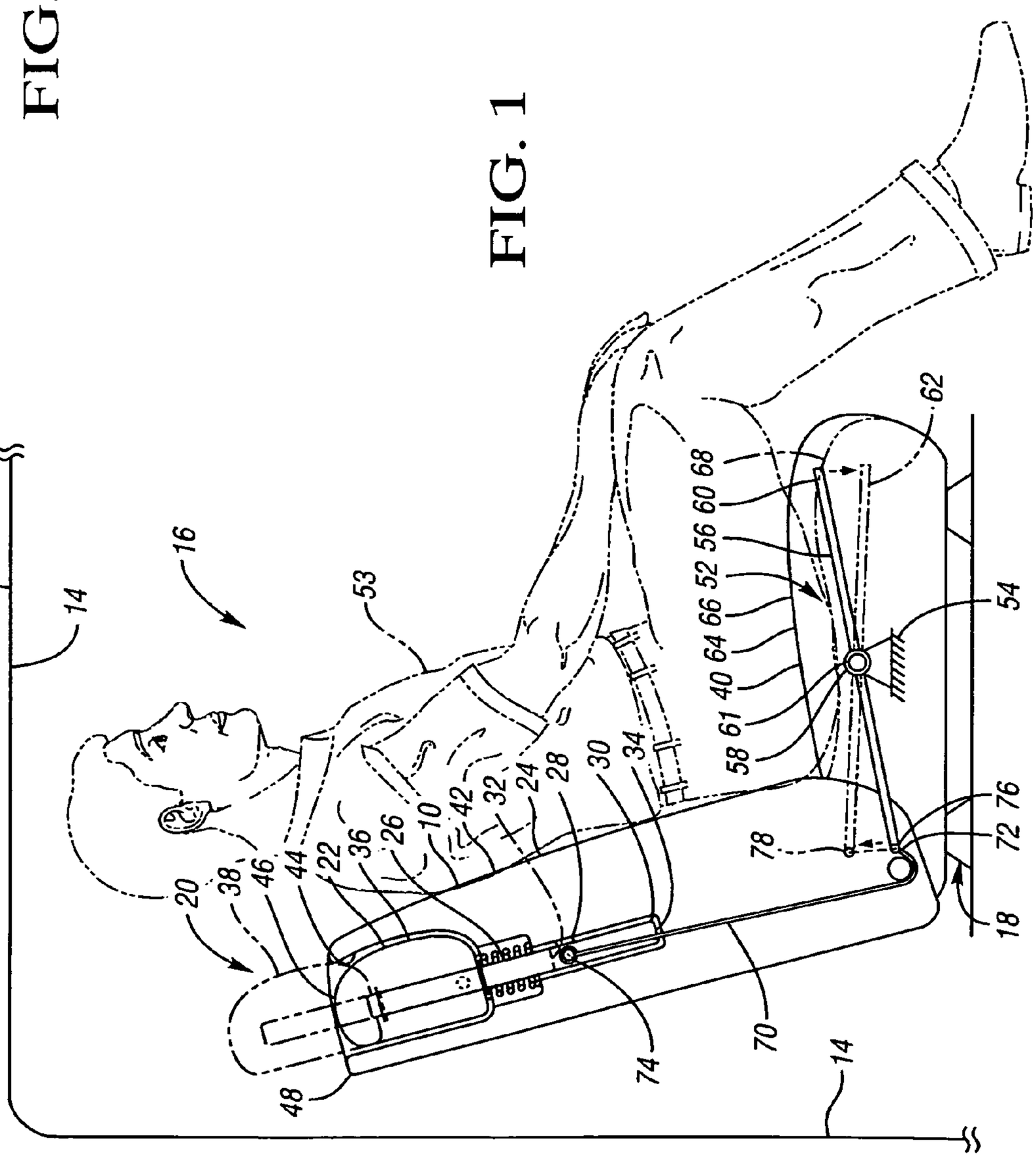
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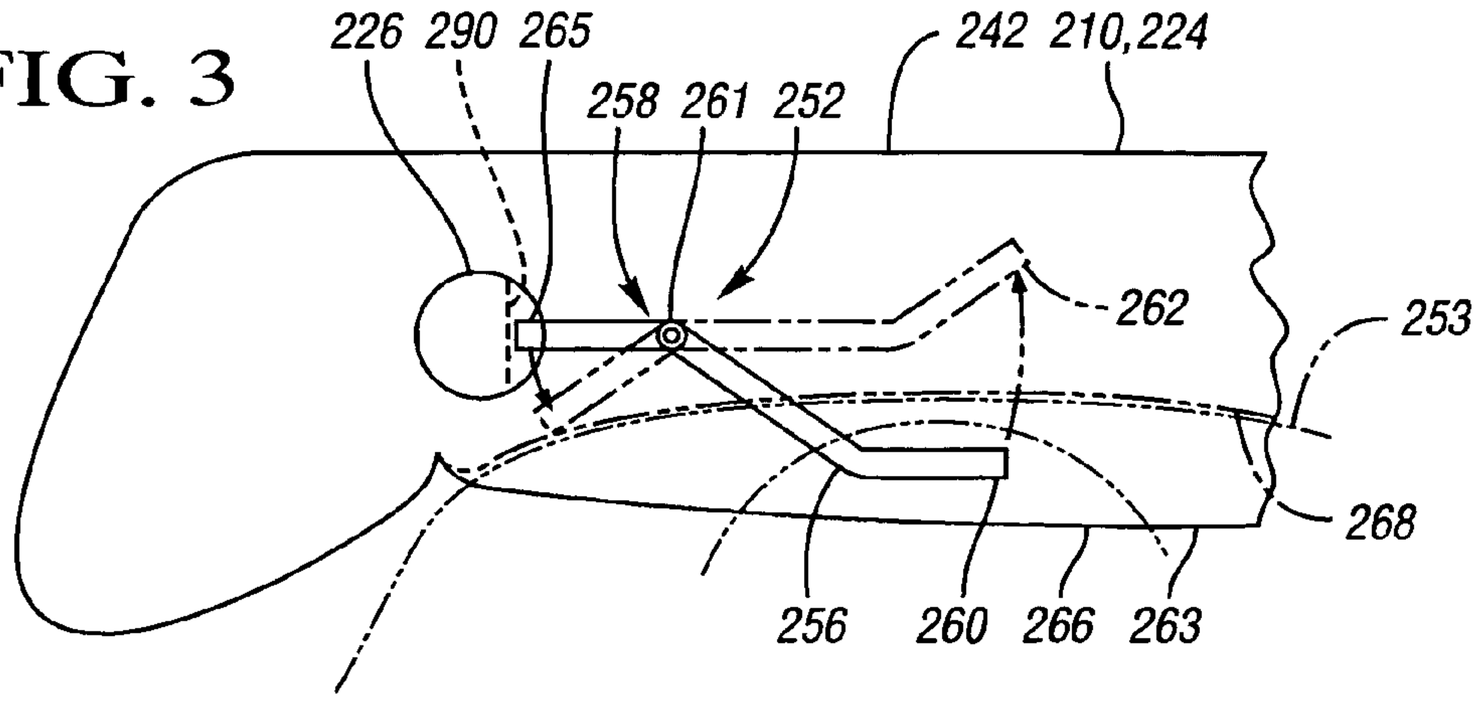
FIG. 1

FIG. 3



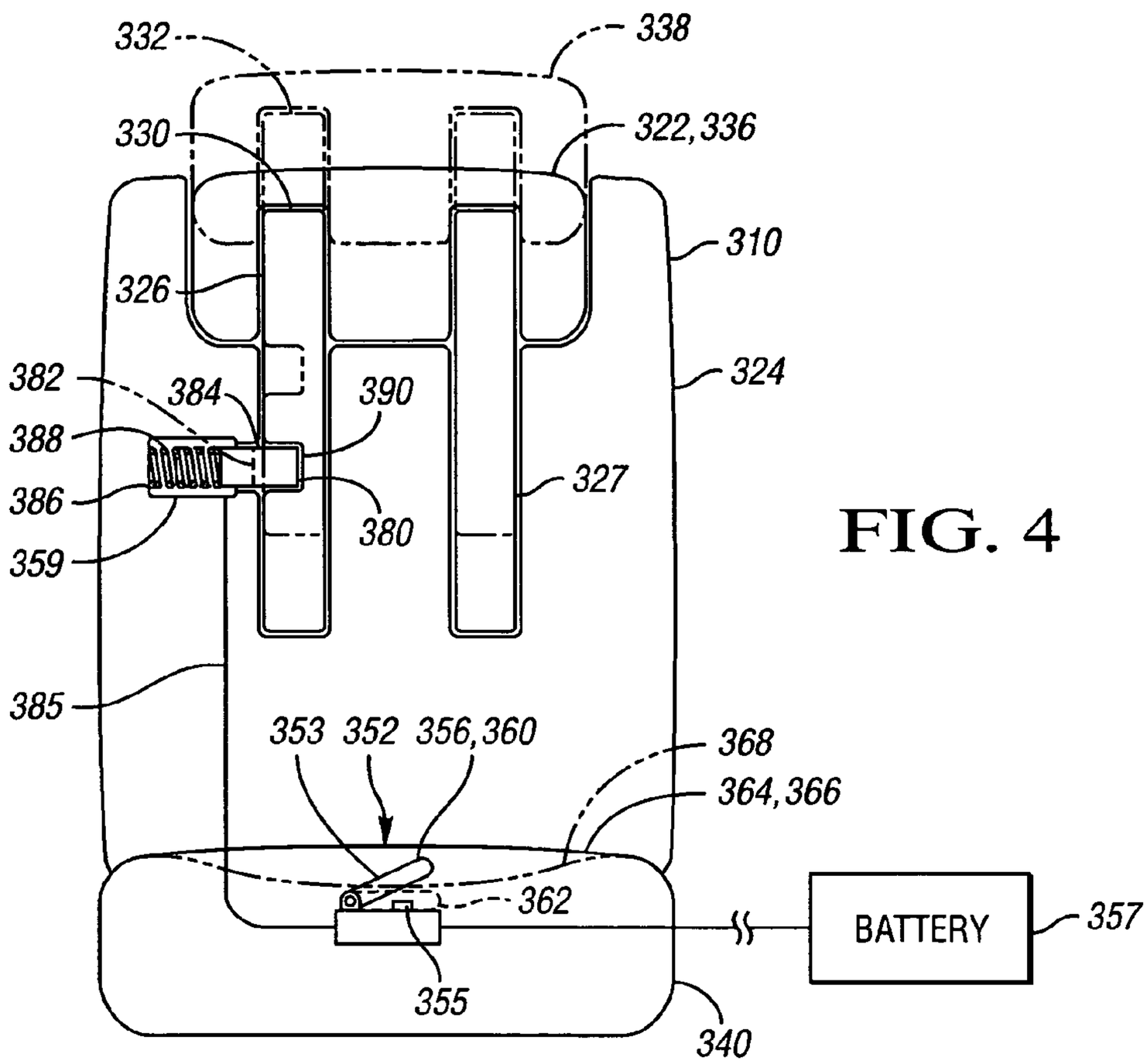


FIG. 4

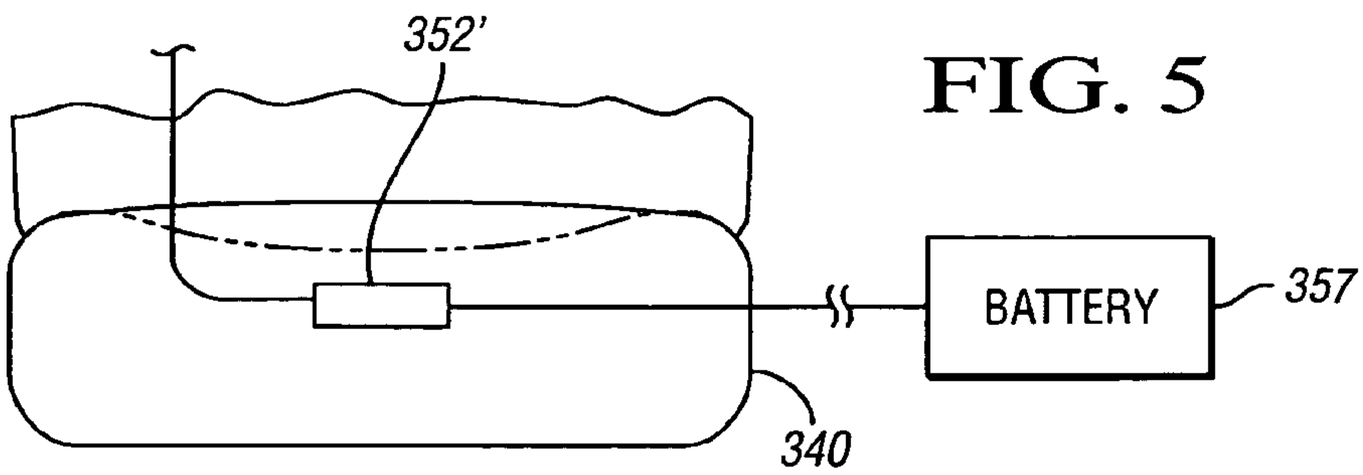


FIG. 5

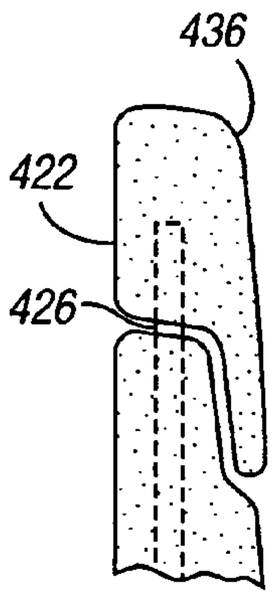


FIG. 6A

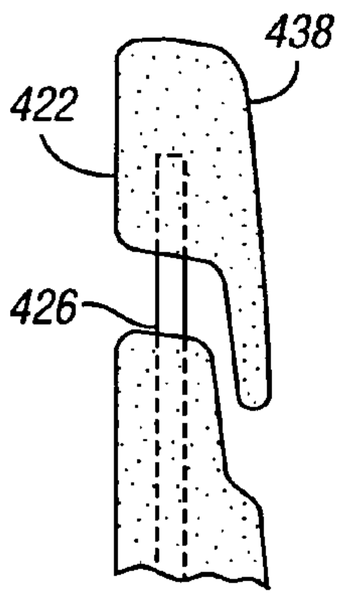


FIG. 6B

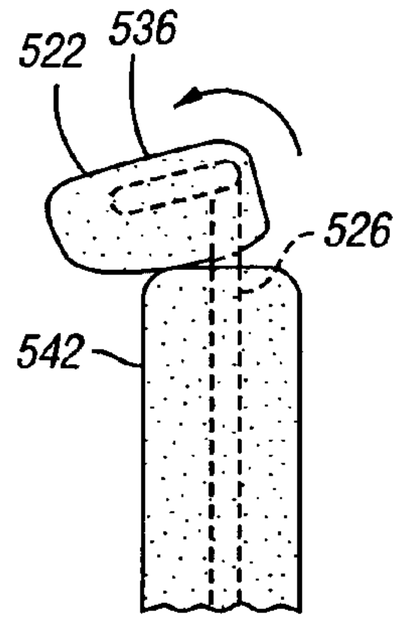


FIG. 7A

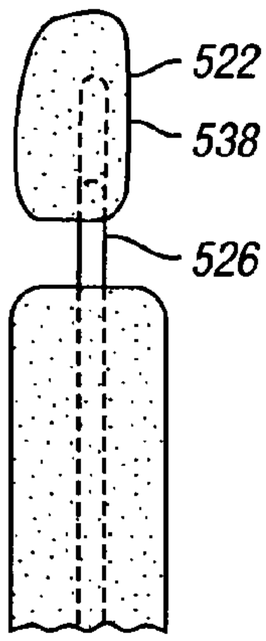


FIG. 7B

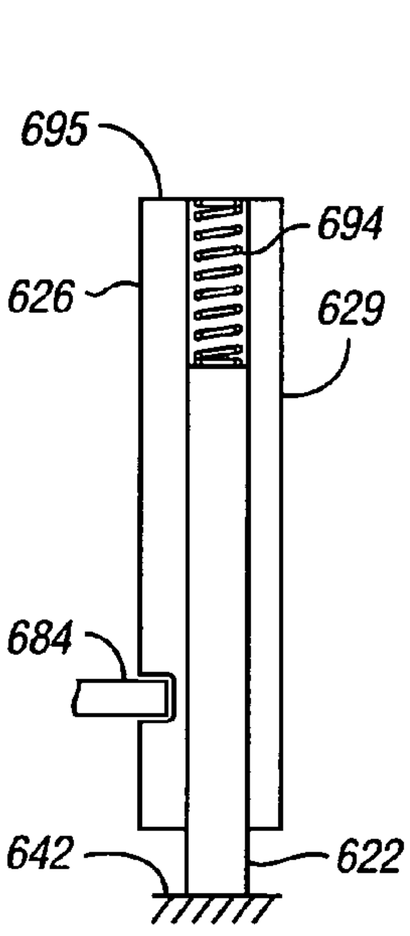


FIG. 8A

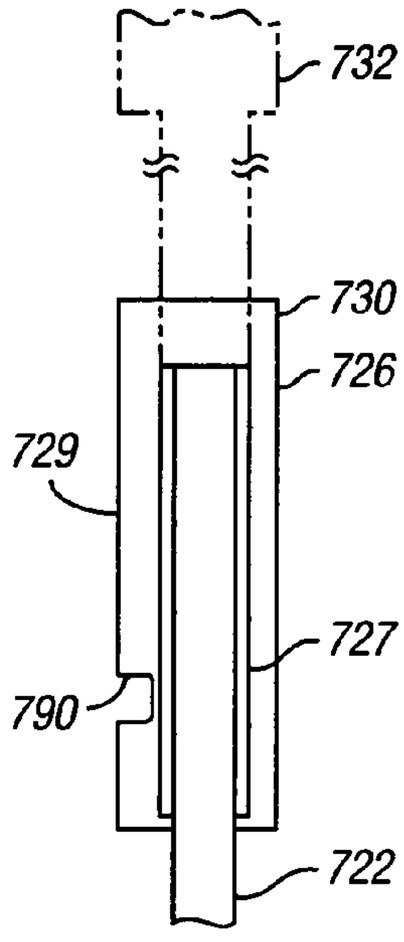


FIG. 8B

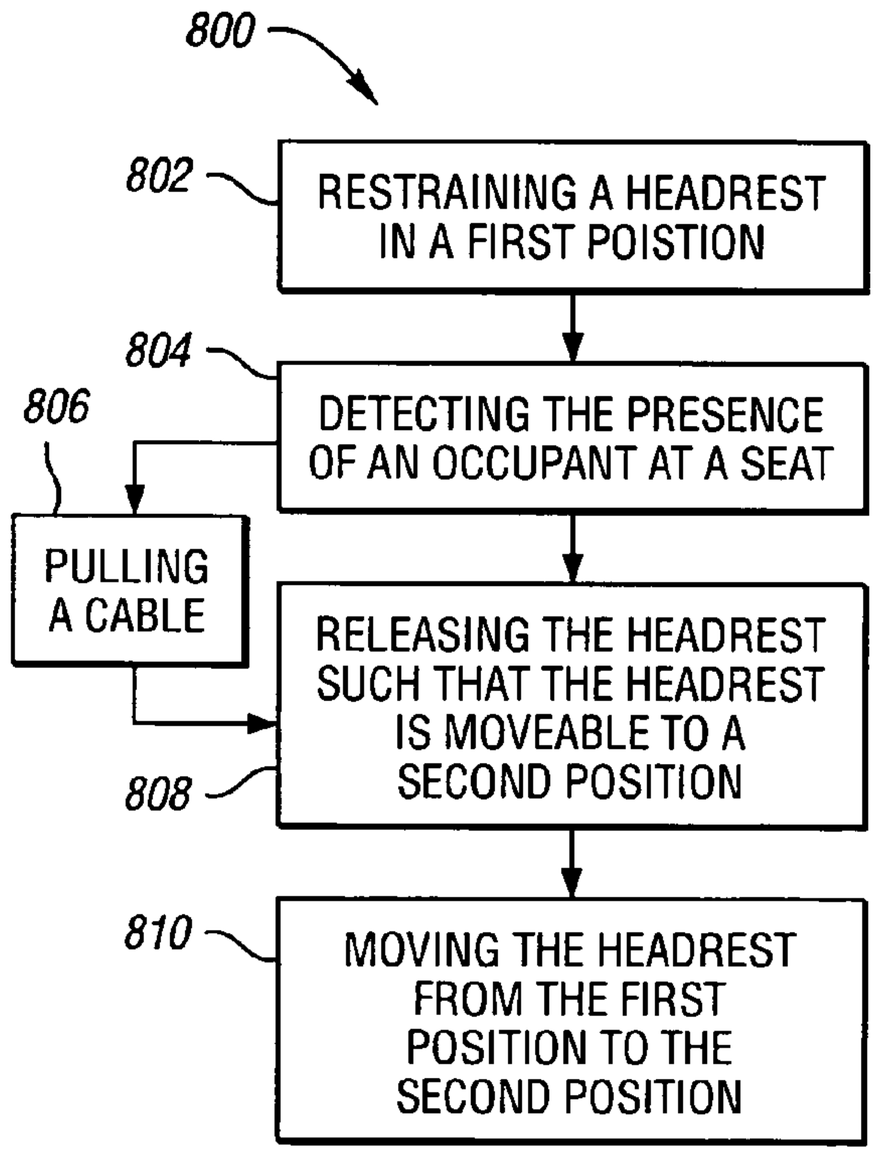


FIG. 9

OCCUPANT DETECTING SEAT ASSEMBLY WITH HEADREST AND METHOD OF MOVING HEADREST

TECHNICAL FIELD

The present invention relates to a seat assembly including a headrest.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

A seat assembly, such as a vehicle seat assembly, often includes a headrest connected to the seat. It is desirable to be able to move a vehicle headrest between a variety of positions for occupant comfort and for enhanced driver visibility. The art includes a variety of headrest positioning mechanisms.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

A seat assembly includes a seat and a headrest connectable to the seat. The headrest is movable between a first position (i.e., a non-use position) and a second position. The seat assembly further includes a spring or biasing element operable for biasing the headrest toward the second position. The seat assembly further includes a releasable headrest restraining mechanism. The releasable headrest restraining mechanism is operable for restraining the headrest in the first position when the seat is unoccupied and for releasing the headrest to permit movement of the headrest to the second position via the biasing element when the seat is occupied. Preferably, the headrest extends further from the seat in the second position than in the first position. Thus, the first position may be a lowered, "non-use" position and the second position may be a raised "use" position. Accordingly, if the seat assembly is disposed in a rearward portion of a vehicle, the headrest will be in the lowered position when there is no occupant in the seat assembly, and a driver looking rearward from a frontward portion of the vehicle is provided with a less obstructed rear view.

In one aspect of the invention, an occupant detection mechanism operable for detecting the presence of an occupant at the seat is operatively connectable to the releasable headrest restraining mechanism. The releasable headrest restraining mechanism is operable for restraining the headrest in the first position when the occupant detection mechanism does not detect the presence of an occupant, and for releasing the releasable headrest restraining mechanism to the second position when the occupant detection mechanism detects the presence of an occupant at the seat.

In another aspect of the invention, the seat forms a cavity. The headrest is substantially within the cavity when the headrest is in the first position.

In another aspect of the invention, the headrest has an upper most portion and the seat has a top portion. The cavity is designed such that the upper most portion of the headrest does not extend beyond the top portion of the seat when the headrest is in the first position.

In one aspect of the invention, the occupant detection mechanism is disposable in the seat and includes a lever. The lever is movable between undepressed position and depressed position. The lever moves from the undepressed position to the depressed position in response to the presence of an occupant at the seat. The releasable headrest restraining mechanism releases the headrest when the lever is moved to the depressed position.

In another aspect of the invention, the seat assembly includes a cable configured for connecting the lever with the releasable headrest restraining mechanism. The lever is operable for pulling the cable when the lever moves from the undepressed position to the depressed position in response to the presence of an occupant at the seat. The releasable headrest restraining mechanism releases the headrest when the cable is pulled.

In another aspect of the invention, the seat includes a seatback and a seat bottom. The lever may be disposed in either of the seatback or the seat bottom within the scope of the invention.

In another aspect of the invention, the occupant detection mechanism is disposed in the seat. The occupant detection mechanism includes a switch. The switch is operable in response to the presence of an occupant at the seat for sending a communication signal to the releasable headrest restraining mechanism. The releasable headrest restraining mechanism releases the headrest in response to the communication signal.

In another aspect of the invention, the occupant detection mechanism includes a sensor. The sensor is operable for signaling communication with the releasable headrest restraining mechanism. The sensor sends a communication signal to the releasable headrest restraining mechanism when the sensor detects the presence of an occupant at the seat. The releasable headrest restraining mechanism releases the headrest in response to the communication signal.

In another aspect of the invention, the releasable headrest restraining mechanism is movable between a restraining position and a release position. The releasable headrest restraining mechanism restrains the headrest when it is in the restraining position and releases the headrest when it is in the release position.

In another aspect of the invention, the releasable headrest restraining mechanism includes a solenoid having a movable actuator. The occupant detection mechanism is operable for signaling communication with the solenoid. The actuator moves from the restraining position to the release position when the solenoid receives a communication signal from the occupant detection mechanism.

In another aspect of the invention, the seat assembly further includes headrest support structure. The headrest support structure is operable for connecting the headrest with the seat. The headrest support structure is movable with the headrest with respect to the seat. The headrest support structure is releasably matable with the releasable headrest restraining mechanism. The releasable headrest restraining mechanism releasably restrains the headrest support structure such that the headrest is restrained in the first position when the releasable headrest restraining mechanism and the headrest support structure are mated. The releasable headrest restraining mechanism releases from the headrest support structure to permit movement of the headrest to the second position when the occupant detection mechanism detects the presence of an occupant at the seat.

In another aspect of the invention, the biasing element is a spring operably connectable to the headrest support structure. The spring moves from either a compressed position or an extended position to a substantially relaxed position when the releasable headrest restraining mechanism moves from the restraining position to the release position. The movement of the biasing element acts to move the headrest from the first position to the second position.

In another aspect of the invention, the spring is disposable inside of the headrest support structure. For instance, the

headrest support structure may be a hollow post with the spring disposed inside of the post.

A method includes restraining a headrest in a first position. The method further includes detecting the presence of an occupant at a seat connected to the headrest. The method further includes, after the detecting step, releasing the headrest such that the headrest is movable to a second position. The method further includes, after the releasing step, moving the headrest from the first position to the second position.

In another aspect of the invention, detecting the presence of an occupant at the seat includes depressing a lever. In this instance, the method further includes pulling a cable. Pulling the cable acts to release the headrest.

A vehicle includes a seat assembly located in an interior passenger space formed by structure of the vehicle. The seat assembly is as described above. The headrest extends higher in the interior passenger space in the second position than in the first position.

The above features and advantages and other features and advantages of the present invention are readily apparent from the following detailed description of the best modes for carrying out the invention when taken in connection with the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. **1** is a schematic illustration in side view of a first embodiment of a seat assembly located in a vehicle and having an occupant detection mechanism;

FIG. **2** is a schematic illustration in fragmentary front view of a portion of the seat assembly of FIG. **1**;

FIG. **3** is a schematic illustration in fragmentary plan view of a second embodiment of a seat assembly including an alternative occupant detection mechanism;

FIG. **4** is a schematic illustration in front view of a third embodiment of a seat assembly including another alternative occupant detection mechanism;

FIG. **5** is a schematic illustration in fragmentary front view of an alternative occupant detection mechanism that may be employed within the seat assembly of FIG. **4** to establish a fourth embodiment of a seat assembly;

FIGS. **6**A and **6**B are schematic side view illustrations in fragmentary view of an alternative shingle-type headrest in a first, lowered position and a second, raised position, respectively;

FIGS. **7**A and **7**B are schematic side view illustrations in fragmentary view of another alternative (dumping style) headrest for use in the seat assembly of FIG. **1**, shown in a first, lowered position and a second, raised position; respectively;

FIG. **8**A is a schematic side view illustration of headrest support structure utilizing internal springs and matable with a releasable headrest restraining mechanism;

FIG. **8**B is a schematic side view illustration in fragmentary view of alternative headrest support structure employing a telescoping post, shown both in a lowered position and in a raised position (in phantom); and

FIG. **9** is a flow diagram illustrating a method of moving a headrest.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Referring to the drawings, wherein like reference numbers refer to like components, FIG. **1** shows a seat assembly **10** disposed in a vehicle **12**. The vehicle includes body structure **14** (such as a roof, floor and side panels) which forms an interior passenger space **16**. The seat assembly **10** is mounted to the vehicle **12** using mounting attachments **18** such that the seat assembly **10** is disposed in a rearward portion **20** of the interior passenger space **16**.

The seat assembly **10** includes a headrest **22** which is connected to a seat **24** via headrest support structure **26**. The headrest support structure **26** is preferably in the form of a hollow post, as shown, but may include other mechanisms for attaching the headrest **22** to the seat **24**. The headrest support structure **26** is anchored to the seat **24** through an anchoring mechanism **28**, as will be known to those skilled in the art. Although anchored to the seat **24**, the headrest support structure **26** is movable between a lowered position **30** and a raised position **32**, as indicated by the bottom end **34** of the headrest support structure **26** moving from lowered position **30** to raised position **32** (shown in phantom). When the headrest support structure **26** moves from the lowered position **30** to the raised position **32**, the headrest **22** moves from the first position **36** to a second position **38** (shown in phantom).

The seat **24** forms seat bottom **40** as well as seat back **42**. The seat bottom **40** and the seat back **42** may be separately formed and joined to one another, or may be formed as a unitary seat. The seat back **42** forms a cavity **44**. When the headrest **22** is in the first position **36**, an uppermost portion of the headrest **46** does not extend beyond a top portion **48** of the seat **24**. Additionally, when the headrest **22** is in the first position **36**, the headrest **22** is substantially within the cavity **44**. Notably, the headrest **22** extends further from the seat **24** when the headrest is in the second position **38** than when it is in the first position **36**. Accordingly, the headrest **22** extends higher in the interior of passenger space **16** when it is in the second position **38** than when it is in the first position **36**. Thus, a view of a driver looking rearward in the interior passenger space **16** toward the seat assembly **10** is less obstructed when the headrest is in the first position **36** than when it is in the second position **38**. Thus, it is desirable to maintain the headrest **22** in the first position **36** unless the headrest **22** is needed for support of an occupant in the seat assembly **10**. Accordingly, the seat assembly **10** includes an occupant detection mechanism **52** operable for detecting the presence of an occupant at the seat assembly **10**. In the embodiment of FIG. **1**, the occupant detection mechanism is disposed in the seat bottom **40** of the seat **24**.

Operation of the occupant detection mechanism **52** in relation to the location of the headrest **22** in the first position **36** or in the second position **38** will now be discussed. The occupant detection mechanism **52** is disposed within the seat bottom **40** and is anchored thereto via anchoring structure **54**. The occupant detection mechanism **52** includes a lever **56** that is movable about a pivot mechanism **58**. The pivot mechanism **58** may be spring-biased by a circular or torsion spring **61** such that the lever **56** is normally maintained (i.e., biased) in an undepressed position **60**. The lever **56** is movable to a depressed position **62** (shown in phantom) in accordance with a force such as the weight of an occupant **53** moving a surface **64** of the seat bottom **40** from an undeformed position **66** to a deformed position **68** (shown in phantom).

A cable **70** is operatively connected to the lever **56** at a first end **72**. When the lever **56** is moved from the undepressed position **60** to the depressed position **62**, the first end **72** of the cable moves from an original position **76** to a response position **78**.

When the first end of the cable **72** moves from the original position **76** to the response position **78**, a second end **74** of

the cable moves from an inward position **80** to an outward position **82** (see FIG. **2**; "inward" and "outward" being in respect to position with respect to the headrest support structure **26**.)

Referring to FIG. **2**, the second end **74** of the cable is rigidly connected to a pin **84** which may also be referred to as a detent. The pin **84** is included within a releasable headrest restraining mechanism **86**. The releasable headrest restraining mechanism **86** is connected to the seat back **42** of the seat **24**. The releasable headrest restraining mechanism **86** further includes a biasing spring **88**. The biasing spring **88** retains the pin **84** within a recess **90** formed in the headrest support structure **26**. The recess **90** aligns with the pin **84** when the headrest support structure **26** is in the lowered position **30**. When the pin **84** is received in the recess **90**, the releasable headrest restraining mechanism **86** is in a restraining position **92** (shown in phantom).

A biasing element such as a spring **94** is disposed around the headrest support structure **26**. When the headrest support structure **26** is in the lowered position **30** (see FIG. **1**), the spring **94** is in a compressed position, creating an upward-biasing upward force. Other biasing elements such as an elastic band or a pneumatic or hydraulic piston may be employed within the scope of the invention. To place the headrest **22** in the first position **36**, corresponding with the lowered position **30** of the headrest support structure **26**, a manual force is applied to overcome the upward-biasing force of the spring **94**. The spring **94** may rest against a support plate **96** mounted to a bottom portion **98** of the headrest **22**. When the cable **70** is pulled by the lever **56** such that the second end **74** of the cable moves from the inward position **80** to the outward position **82**, the pin **84** likewise moves from the restraining position **92** to a release position **100** (i.e., the pin **84** moves out of the recess **90**). (Note that the second end **74** of the cable extends to the inward position **80** when the pin **84** is in the restraining position **92** (shown partially in phantom in FIG. **2**)). The movement of the pin **84** releases (i.e., unlatches) the headrest support structure **26**, allowing the headrest **22** to move from the first position **36** to the second position **38**. Movement of the headrest **22** is due to stored energy in the spring **94** expanding the spring **94** from the compressed position associated with the lowered position **30** of the headrest support structure to a relaxed position (not shown, but extending between the support plate **96'** when shown attached to the headrest **22** in the second position **38** and a bottom end **102** of the spring element, the bottom end **102** being fixed to the adjacent seat back **42**). Notably, when the headrest support structure **26** is released, the biasing spring **88** of the releasable headrest restraining mechanism **86** retains the pin **84** against the surface **104** of the headrest support structure **26**. Thus, when the headrest **22** is manually moved from the second position **38** to the first position **36**, recess **90** will be realigned with the pin **84**, which will then slide into the recess **90** due to the biasing spring **88**. Accordingly, at that point, the releasable headrest restraining mechanism **86** will once again restrain (i.e., latch) the headrest support structure **26**, and thereby the headrest **22**.

The headrest **22** is equipped with an adjustment pin **106** that permits the headrest to be adjusted to varying heights. The headrest support structure **26** is formed with complementary adjustment recesses **108**. The adjustment pin **106** is movable by depression to any of the adjustment recesses **108** to change the overall height of the seat assembly **10** by raising or lowering the headrest, as will be readily understood by those skilled in the art. Preferably, the adjustment pin **106** is disposed in a lower-most adjustment recess **110**. Accordingly, when the headrest **22** is moved to the second position **38**, the adjustment pin **106** may be moved to any of the other adjustment recesses **108** to adjust the headrest **22** to a higher position in order to accommodate taller occupants.

Referring to FIG. **3**, a seat assembly **210** includes a seat **224** that has an occupant detection mechanism **252** mounted within a seat back **242**. The occupant detection mechanism **252** includes a lever **256** that is biased in an undepressed position **260** by a circular or torsion spring **261** disposed about a pivot mechanism **258**. When an occupant **253** leans against the seat back **242**, the lever **256** is moved from the undepressed position **260** to a depressed position **262** in correspondence with a surface **263** of the seat back **242** moving from an undeformed position **266** to a deformed position **268** (shown in phantom). Headrest structure **226** is disposed within the seat **224** and is connected to a headrest (not shown) in a manner similar to the connection between the headrest support structure **26** and headrest **22** of FIGS. **1** and **2**. The headrest support structure **226** is formed with a recess **290**. When the lever **256** is in the undepressed position **260**, a retaining end **265** of the lever is captured within the recess **290**. However, when the lever **256** is moved to the depressed position **262**, the lever **256** pivots via the pivot mechanism **258**, moving the retaining end **265** of the lever **256** out of the recess **290**. When the retaining end **265** is moved out of the recess **290**, the headrest support structure **226** is released from a lowered position to a raised position in the same fashion as the headrest support structure **26** of FIGS. **1** and **2** moves from a lowered position **30** to a raised position **32**.

Referring to FIG. **4**, a seat assembly **310** includes occupant detection mechanism **352** disposed in a seat bottom **340** of the seat **324**. The occupant detection mechanism **352** includes circuit closing means **353** such as a mechanical switch. When an occupant (not shown) sits on the seat bottom **340**, a surface **364** of the seat bottom **340** moves from an undeformed position **366** to the deformed position **368**, thus moving a lever **356** of the circuit closing means **353** from an undepressed position **360** to a depressed position **362**. In the depressed position **362**, contact is made with a contact element **355**, thus closing a circuit between a power source **357** such as a battery (which may be the main battery powering the vehicle) and a solenoid **359**. The solenoid **359** moves an actuator **384** between an inward position **380** and an outward position **382** (shown in phantom). The solenoid **359** is powered to move the actuator **384** by a communication signal **385** (i.e., electrical current) sent from the circuit closing means **353** when the circuit closing means **353** is closed as described above. The actuator **384** moves out of a recess **390** formed in headrest support structure **326**, thus allowing stored spring energy to move the headrest support structure **326** from a lowered position **330** to a raised position **332** (shown in phantom) corresponding to movement of attached headrest **322** from a first position **336** to a second position **338**. A biasing spring **388** may be employed within the solenoid **359** to bias the actuator **384** against the headrest structure **326** such that the actuator **384** will be moved into the recess **390** when the headrest **322** is repositioned such that the headrest structure **326** is in the lowered position **330**, the releasable headrest restraining mechanism **386** thus being in a restraining position again. The solenoid **359**, the actuator **384** and the biasing spring **388** are included within a releasable headrest restraining mechanism **386** which operates as described to retain the headrest **322** in the first position **336** when the actuator **384** is in the inward (retaining) position or move to

a release position (i.e., the outward position **382**) to permit the headrest **322** to move to the second position **338**. Notably, the headrest support structure **326** may be in the form of a post. An additional post **327** may likewise be operatively connected to the headrest **322** and movable therewith in response to movement of the headrest support structure **326**.

Referring to FIG. **5**, as an alternative to the levers **56** and **256** shown in FIGS. **1** and **3** and the circuit closing means **353** shown in FIG. **4**, an occupant detection mechanism may be in the form of a sensor **352'**. A variety of sensor types may be used within the scope of the claimed invention. For instance, a weight-sensing sensor (i.e., employing a strain gauge or the like) or a proximity sensor may be employed to detect the presence of an occupant. Like the circuit closing means **353**, the sensor **352'** is in signaling communication with the releasable headrest restraining mechanism **386** (see FIG. **4**) and is operable to send a communication signal thereto via power from the battery **357** to which it is operatively connected.

Referring to FIGS. **6**A and **6**B, a headrest **422** may be a shingle-type headrest. Thus, when headrest support structure **426** is released by a releasable headrest restraining mechanism (not shown), the shingle-type headrest will move from a first position **436** shown in FIG. **6**A to a second position **438** shown in FIG. **6**B.

Another alternative type of headrest **522** (which may be referred to as a dumping headrest) may be employed within the scope of the invention. As shown in FIG. **7**A, the headrest **522** may be maintained in a first position **536** (i.e., a lowered or dumped position). Headrest support structure **526** to which the headrest **522** is operatively connected may then be released by a releasable headrest restraining mechanism (not shown) in a manner similar to that described with respect to FIGS. **1-4** to permit the headrest **522** to move to a second position **538**. (Those skilled in the art will readily recognize that a cammed track may be employed to permit the headrest **522** to move from the dumped position to the second (raised) position **538**.) Alternatively, interference between the headrest **522** and the seat back **542** may maintain the headrest **522** in the first position **536**. When the headrest support structure **526** is released, the interference may be overcome to permit the headrest **522** to pivot to the second position **538**.

Referring to FIGS. **8**A and **8**B, it may be seen that a variety of headrest support structures may be used within the scope of the invention. Referring to FIG. **8**A, the headrest support structure **626** comprised of an inner post portion **622** connected with an outer post portion **629** via an internal spring **694** is shown. A pin **684** included within a releasable headrest restraining mechanism (not shown) maintains the outer post portion **629** in a lowered position as shown. Movement of the pin **684** (as described with respect to FIGS. **1-3** or as described with respect to the actuator **384** of FIG. **4**) allows the outer post portion **629** to be released and the spring **694** to expand thus moving an upper edge **695** of the outer post portion **629** to a raised position (not shown) as will be readily understood by those skilled in the art. The inner post portion **622** is mounted within a seat back **642**.

Referring to FIG. **8**B, headrest support structure **726** having an outer post portion **729**, an inner post portion **722** and a mid post portion **727** may be employed within the scope of the invention. When a releasable headrest restraining mechanism (not shown) is removed from a recess **790** formed in the outer post portion **729**, compressed spring energy from a spring element (not shown) may allow the headrest support structure **726** to move from the lowered position **730** to a raised position **732** (partially shown in phantom) in a telescoping fashion as will be readily understood by those skilled in the art.

Referring to FIG. **9**, a method **800** of moving a headrest is illustrated. The method **800** includes restraining a headrest in a first position **802**. Restraining a headrest **802** may be accomplished by a releasable headrest restraining mechanism releasably matable with headrest support structure as described with respect to FIGS. **1-5** above. The method **800** further includes detecting **804** the presence of an occupant at a seat. The seat is operably connected to the headrest. The method **800** may further include pulling a cable **806**. The method may further include releasing the headrest **808** such that it is movable to a second position. As described above with respect to FIGS. **1-2**, pulling the cable **70** results in the release of headrest support structure **26** by the releasable headrest restraining mechanism **86** to permit the headrest **22** to move to the second position **38**. The method **800** may further include moving **810** the headrest from the first position to the second position. As described above with respect to FIGS. **1** and **2**, when the headrest support structure **26** is released, stored energy in the spring element **94** acts to move the headrest **22** from the first position **36** to the second position **38**. Stored spring energy may also be used to move the headrest from the first position to the second position in the embodiments shown in FIGS. **3-5** above.

As set forth in the claims, various features shown and described in accordance with the different embodiments of the invention illustrated may be combined.

While the best modes for carrying out the invention have been described in detail, those familiar with the art to which this invention relates will recognize various alternative designs and embodiments for practicing the invention within the scope of the appended claims.

The invention claimed is:

1. A seat assembly comprising:

a seat;

a headrest connectable to said seat and movable between a first position and a second position with respect to said seat;

a biasing element; wherein said biasing element is operable for biasing said headrest toward said second position;

a releasable headrest restraining mechanism including a solenoid having a movable actuator;

an occupant detection mechanism operable for detecting the presence of an occupant at said seat; wherein said occupant detection mechanism is operatively connectable to said releasable headrest restraining mechanism; and

wherein said releasable headrest restraining mechanism is operable for restraining said headrest in said first position when said occupant detection mechanism does not detect the presence of an occupant and for releasing said headrest to permit movement of said headrest to said second position via said biasing element when said occupant detection mechanism detects the presence of an occupant at said seat;

wherein said releasable headrest restraining mechanism is movable between a restraining position and a release position; wherein said releasable headrest restraining mechanism restrains said headrest when said releasable headrest restraining mechanism is in said restraining position; and wherein said releasable headrest restraining mechanism releases said headrest when said releasable headrest restraining mechanism is in said release position;

wherein said occupant detection mechanism is operable for signaling communication with said solenoid; and wherein said actuator moves from said restraining position to said release position when said solenoid receives a communication signal from said occupant detection mechanism.

2. The seat assembly of claim **1**, wherein said headrest extends further from said seat in said second position than in said first position.

3. The seat assembly of claim **2**, wherein said seat forms a cavity; wherein said headrest is substantially within said cavity when said headrest is in said first position.

4. The seat assembly of claim **3**, wherein said headrest has an uppermost portion; wherein said seat has a top portion; and wherein said uppermost portion of said headrest does not extend beyond said top portion of said seat when said headrest is in said first position.

5. The seat assembly of claim **1**, wherein said occupant detection mechanism is disposable in said seat; wherein said occupant detection mechanism includes a lever; wherein said lever is movable between an undepressed position and a depressed position; wherein said lever moves from said undepressed position to said depressed position in response to the presence of an occupant at said seat; and

wherein said releasable headrest restraining mechanism releases said headrest when said lever is moved to said depressed position.

6. The seat assembly of claim **5**, further comprising a cable configured for connecting said lever with said releasable headrest restraining mechanism; wherein said lever is operable for pulling said cable when said lever moves from said undepressed position to said depressed position in response to the presence of an occupant at said seat; and wherein said releasable headrest restraining mechanism releases said headrest when said cable is pulled.

7. The seat assembly of claim **5**, wherein said seat includes a seat back and a seat bottom; and wherein said lever is disposable in one of said seat back and said seat bottom.

8. The seat assembly of claim **1**, wherein said occupant detection mechanism is disposable in said seat; wherein said occupant detection mechanism includes a switch, wherein said switch is operable in response to the presence of an occupant at the seat for sending a communication signal to said releasable headrest restraining mechanism; and

wherein said releasable headrest restraining mechanism releases said headrest in response to said communication signal.

9. The seat assembly of claim **1**, wherein said occupant detection mechanism includes a sensor; wherein said sensor is operable for signaling communication with said releasable headrest restraining mechanism; wherein said sensor is operable for sending a communication signal to said releasable headrest restraining mechanism when said sensor detects the presence of an occupant at said seat; and

wherein said releasable headrest restraining mechanism releases said headrest in response to said communication signal.

10. The seat assembly of claim **1**, further comprising:

headrest support structure; wherein said headrest support structure is operable for connecting said headrest with said seat; wherein said headrest support structure is movable with said headrest with respect to said seat; wherein said headrest support structure is releasably matable with said releasable headrest restraining mechanism; wherein said releasable headrest restraining mechanism restrains said headrest support structure such that said headrest is restrained in said first position when said releasable headrest restraining mechanism and said headrest support structure are mated; and

wherein said releasable headrest restraining mechanism releases from said headrest support structure to permit movement of said headrest to said second position when said occupant detection mechanism detects the presence of an occupant at said seat.

11. The seat assembly of claim **10**, wherein said biasing element is a spring operatively connectable with said headrest support structure; and wherein said spring moves from one of a compressed position and an extended position to a substantially relaxed position when said releasable headrest restraining mechanism moves from said restraining position to said release position, said movement of said spring acting to move said headrest from said first position to said second position.

12. The seat of claim **11**, wherein said spring is disposable inside of said headrest support structure.

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